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Word Lists and Vocabulary Difficulty in Reading Matter

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ATTACHED TO the inside of the cover of a book recently published for children at the fourth grade level is a leaflet which sets forth some of the merits claimed for the publication. Among the statements presented in the leaflet is the following:

The book is written simply. The vocabulary is well within the understanding of fourth grade children; the great majority of the words included are found in the Thorndike Word List.

This sort of statement is not at all uncommon. An ample supply of similar evaluations of the vocabulary difficulty of books published for children's use in school can be found in the advertising material accompanying these books. Usually such evaluations state that the vocabulary is simple, or that it is within the understanding of pupils for whom it is intended. These statements at least infer that simplicity of vocabulary is guaranteed by the fact that the vocabulary of the book has been carefully checked against a noteworthy reading-word list, and that only a small percentage of the words in the book are not found in the reading-word list.

Now it is clear that a book or a selection to be read by children at any given

stage should, in its vocabulary, stay well within the understanding of these children. In order that the child may read with meaning, most of the words included should fall within his reading vocabulary. The inclusion of too many unknown or difficult words blocks comprehension and retards interest in reading. But in this discussion, the important question is—*Does the fact that the words constituting the vocabulary of a given book can be found among the most important words of a noteworthy reading-word list guarantee that the vocabulary of the book is within the understanding of children for whom it is intended?*

In beginning the discussion of this problem, it is important to present two fundamental hypotheses. First, no matter if one is able to pronounce or speak a given printed symbol, or no matter if he recognizes it visually as something he has seen before, he does not read the symbol unless he realizes some degree of correct meaning. Reading without the realization of some degree of correct meaning is a myth. Second, the source of meaning in reading lies in the concepts or meanings which the reader takes with him to the printed page. Certainly

it does not lie on or in the printed page. Printed symbols do not give meaning to the reader. They merely stimulate him to recall the concepts or meanings which they represent. Then the reader by recalling, manipulating, and combining these concepts *makes* meaning in his mind. If the reader does not possess the meanings that the printed symbols stand for, it is utterly impossible for him to read those symbols and achieve meaning. Thus it is clear that the real and fundamental source of meaning in reading lies in the concepts that the reader possesses. This must mean that *the fundamental measure of the difficulty of a printed word is the degree of familiarity which the reader has with the concept or meaning that the printed symbol represents in the setting in which it is used.*

In attempting to show that the vocabularies of their publications for children are well within the limits of sufficient simplicity, authors and publishers have, as mentioned previously, turned to using well known reading-word lists as measuring sticks. In general, the usual procedure involves a comparison of the vocabulary of the book or the selection with the words in the word list. If the great majority of the words in the book are included in the word list, the book is judged to be relatively simple. If not, the reverse is supposed to be true. Although several different reading-word lists are used for this purpose, the Thorndike list,¹ composed of the 20,000 words appearing most frequently in reading matter, is most commonly applied.

But it is important to remember that these reading-word lists are only lists of words that have occurred most frequently in reading matter. We do not know that they are lists of words that children understand. When comparison shows that

90 per cent of the words of a given selection are also included, for example, in the Thorndike list, it merely means that 90 per cent of the words in the selection are among the twenty thousand words used most frequently in previously constructed reading matter. It does not mean that 90 per cent of the words in the selection are understood by elementary school children.

It must seem to some persons, however, that the Thorndike list is a valid guide to the words which children understand. Since the words in this list are the words which appear the most frequently in reading matter, does not the list include those words which the child most likely has contacted and with which he is therefore the most familiar? Does not the Thorndike list include the great majority of words found in studies of children's vocabulary? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, is it not sound reasoning to assume that when a high percentage of the vocabulary of a given reading selection is found with high frequency rating in the Thorndike list, the vocabulary of the selection is simple for children? Acting upon this assumption, some publishers strive to keep the vocabulary of their books well within the limits of the Thorndike list. Likewise, other persons have established statistical formulae and scales which they apply to a given reading selection for the purpose of determining the difficulty of its vocabulary via the Thorndike list. It should be kept in mind that the construction and application of such formulae are based upon the assumption that children do understand the words that possess high frequency rating in the Thorndike list, and that they do not understand words that are not included in the list.

The writer has no quarrel with the notion that, other things being equal, the Thorndike list is the best *available* guide

¹ Thorndike, E. L. *A Teachers Word Book*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1931.

to the determination of the vocabulary difficulty of a given reading selection, provided one concerns himself with masses or large groups of words and does not become too critical of individual words. It is quite probable that a list of the first 1000, 2000, 3000, etc., words in the Thorndike list would contain a large number of words which are most likely to establish the least vocabulary difficulty when used in a reading selection. But in attempting to determine the vocabulary difficulty of a piece of reading matter one *must* concern himself with the difficulty of *individual* words and phrases, and the application of any statistical device to be used in measuring vocabulary difficulty must be based upon known difficulty of individual words.

Consequently, as Dr. Ernest Horn has previously stated, there is great possibility of serious error in using reading-word lists in an uncritical and mechanical fashion for the judging of the vocabulary difficulty of a given reading selection.² In the first place, there are many words of high frequency rating in these lists which are not understood by children for the simple reason that the children do not have the concepts that the words represent. The writer has constructed many sentences containing such words. To illustrate: If one assumes that a sentence containing only words from among the first 2000 of the Thorndike list is "safe" for fourth grade children, the following two sentences, deliberately but easily made by using only words from among the first 2000 of the Thorndike list, would be acceptable for such children:

1. The actual fact is that the labor party is in absolute authority over this industry.
2. This nation will not exchange its principal product for the produce of any other empire.

² The writer makes no claim to originality relative to ideas presented herein. Many of the points included have appeared previously and in more detail. See Horn, E. *Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies*, Chapter V. Charles Scribners Sons, New York, 1937. Dr. Horn should in no sense be held responsible for statements made herein.

Of course, one must remember that factors other than vocabulary contribute to the difficulty of a given sentence, that practically no fourth grade books contain sentences composed of such combinations of words as those given above, and that no sane person would construct such sentences for fourth grade reading material even with the Thorndike list to support his selection of words. Nevertheless these two sentences illustrate what can happen when one judges the difficulty of reading vocabulary by uncritical comparison with reading-word lists.

In the second place, there are many words of low frequency rating that are not included at all in reading-word lists but which nevertheless are understood by children for the simple reason that the children do have the meanings that the words represent. The writer has constructed many sentences containing such words. To illustrate: If we assume that sentences containing several words of lower frequency rating than those among the first 5000 of the Thorndike list are too "hard" for fourth grade children, the following sentences, deliberately but easily made by using some words of low frequency rating in the Thorndike list but which are used frequently by fourth grade children in writing letters outside the school,³ would be eliminated from a selection for such children.

1. Tonight we will make a bonfire and have roasted marshmallows and wieners.
2. Charley poked the little sneak hard enough to give him a nosebleed and a toothache.

In the first of the above sentences, two of the words are in the twelfth, and the twentieth thousand respectively. One of the words is not among the full 20,000. In the second sentence, three words are in the eighth, and twelfth thousand respec-

³ McKee, P. "The Vocabulary of Children's Letters." Unpublished Study. State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado.

tively. One of the words does not appear in the list.

If it is true that the fundamental measure of the difficulty of a word is not its lack of frequent occurrence in reading matter but rather the reader's lack of familiarity with the concept or idea that the word represents, then it is impossible to judge accurately the vocabulary burden of a given selection or book by the degree to which its vocabulary corresponds with the vocabulary of a given reading-word list. Unthinking adherence to such practice can do great harm. It can place in the hands of children material judged to be simple which is really far too difficult. It can also keep from children simple and interesting reading matter that is judged to be too difficult.

It is well to remember, too, that the vocabulary of a selection may not necessarily be simplified by changing word forms. If the word forms used to represent strange concepts have low frequency rating in a reading-word list, does it make the vocabulary less difficult to substitute for those word forms other word forms of higher frequency rating as symbols of the same concepts? Are not the concepts still strange? Only when *familiar* concepts are represented by word forms not readily recognized by the reader as symbols of those concepts, does it pay to substitute word forms of higher frequency rating that are readily recognized as symbols of those concepts. Of course, too, the vocabulary of a selection can be simplified by changing words that represent unfamiliar concepts to words of higher frequency rating which represent familiar concepts.

It is obvious that a word list, showing what words children understand at different grade levels, would be of considerable help in judging the difficulty of a reading selection. Fortunately, important beginnings have been made. Some evidence

on the problem has been gathered through studies of children's spoken vocabulary, and through the most recent and extensive investigations of the vocabulary of children's spontaneous writing at different grade levels.⁴ One recent and extensive investigation has made a beginning through the use of a free association technique together with the compiling of the results of several other vocabulary studies.⁵

However, a more serious deficiency is attached to the use of any available word list in checking vocabulary difficulty. One does not get very far with such checking because the lists do not show the various meanings of a given word which children understand at a given grade level. Many individual words are used with many different meanings in children's reading material, even at the first grade level. A recent analysis of ten primers and ten first grade readers shows that these books contain 2412 different words which are used to represent more than 4000 different meanings, not counting the meanings presented by two or more words combined.⁶ The vocabulary of these books is simple only in so far as first grade children have the different meanings represented by the different words in the settings in which they occur. Is the word "good," used with more than twenty different meanings in these books, simple for first

⁴ For example see (a) Lane, J., "The Meaning-Spoken Vocabulary of Pre-School Children," Master of Arts Thesis, State College of Education, Greeley Colorado; (b) Horn, E., "The Commonest Words in the Spoken Vocabulary of Children up to and Including Six Years of Age," *Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Part I, Chapter VII, 1925; (c) *A Study of the Vocabulary of Children Before Entering the First Grade*, Published by the International Kindergarten Union, Washington, D.C., 1928; (d) Dale, E., *Familiarity of 8000 Common Words to Pupils in the Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth Grade*, (Mimeographed.) Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; (e) Fitzgerald, J. A., *Letters Written Outside the School by Children of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades*, University of Iowa Studies in Education, IX, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1934; (f) McKee, Paul, "A Study of Children's Writing Vocabulary at the Different Grade Levels," Unpublished, State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado.

⁵ Buckingham, B. R. and Dolch, E. W., *A Combined Word List*, Ginn and Company, Boston, 1936.

⁶ McKee, P. and Harrison, L., "The Meaning vocabularies of Primers and First Grade Readers," Unpublished Study, State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, 1937.

grade children who do not have the meaning which it stands for in a given sentence, even though the word can be found among the first 200 words of a reading-word list or a child-usage list? Investigation has shown that words of very high frequency rating in reading-word lists have been a source of difficulty in comprehension in the intermediate and higher grades, simply because the reader did not know the particular meanings with which the words were used in the reading material.⁷

It will be impossible to measure carefully the vocabulary difficulty of reading material until there is available a list of words together with their different meanings which children understand at different grade levels. Fortunately, a beginning has been made on this problem, although as yet nothing is available in printed form.⁸

Attention should be called to the fact that nothing in this discussion infers that children do not or cannot develop new concepts or meanings as they read. It is obvious that in attempting to keep the vocabulary of a selection well within the understanding of children for whom it is intended it is quite possible to limit the inclusion of new words too much. In the interest of continued development of a reading vocabulary, new concepts and meanings should be included in reading

material for children who have learned to read for meaning and who have already acquired a reasonably large reading vocabulary. But it must be remembered that each new word or group of words, representing an unfamiliar concept, must be surrounded by plenty of *familiar detail* in order that the reader may have what he needs to build the new meanings as he reads. One of the great difficulties with many books used by children in school, particularly in the content fields, is this lack of familiar detail essential to the construction of new concepts through reading.

In closing, a word of warning must be offered. *What has been said in this discussion concerning reading-word lists must not be taken as a criticism of these lists.* It is, rather, a criticism of their mechanical misuse by authors and publishers who are more or less driven into this misuse by competition created by uncritical demands of purchasers of school books. As a matter of fact, the best reading-word lists are and will continue to be decidedly useful instruments. The Thorndike list, for example, has certainly prevented great and unwarranted disparity among the vocabularies of books for children, thus helping to make it possible for the child who has developed a reasonable reading vocabulary really to get some reading done. In addition, the Thorndike list is and undoubtedly will continue to be the most valid statement available of the words which are most important for the child to know in order to read widely in the immediate future.

⁷ Dewey, J. C. *A Case Study of Comprehension Difficulties in American History*. Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

⁸ Buckingham, B. R. and Dolch, E. W. "Graded Word Book." Unpublished. Hambrick, F. L. "A Graded Meaning Vocabulary" (In progress). State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado.

The Young Reader and His Teacher

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WITH THE publication of *The Teaching of Reading: a Second Report*¹ by the National Society for the Study of Education there appears one of the most challenging and stimulating volumes in the rapidly growing collection of books on reading. The recommendations offered by the committee, if carried out, should make for more effective ways and measures to aid in solving problems of reading disability and will provide for teachers methods of teaching reading which will alleviate to a great extent the necessity for extensive remedial work in the junior and senior high schools. The entire volume is devoted to a broad conception of reading.

A tremendous amount of research has recently been devoted to the problem of reading and often the class room teacher and the librarian feel somewhat overwhelmed with the mass of technical material. During 1936-1937 many worthwhile books and articles have been contributed to the subject. From this material a few have been selected for the present list to illustrate current procedures in different phases of the work.

In examining recent books and articles on the subject, one is impressed by the assiduous way in which the problem is being attacked all over the country. Colleges and universities offer courses in remedial reading for teachers. Many colleges are testing the reading ability of students. Elementary, junior high and

senior high schools evidence great need for work along this line and much experimentation is in process. Reading clinics like that at New York University directed by Stella S. Center, work in laboratories by specialists like Arthur I. Gates, Donald Durrell, Emmett A. Betts, and others signify the impetus which is being given to the improvement of reading.

Through tests and diagnosis many causes of reading failure stand revealed. Marked attention is given to reading in the primary grades through developing correct reading habits by way of good teaching and individual guidance which tends toward counteracting further reading disability. A definite study revolves around reading readiness and tests are being used for various reading levels. Present experiments provide extensive work with individuals and small groups. In the upper grades various methods of procedure are followed in handling cases depending somewhat on the school set-up. The procedure most commonly used is discovering, by means of standard tests and diagnoses, individual cases in school classes; this is followed by separate group instruction plus a check on pupils' progress and accomplishment, if curriculum practice permits. Individual reading abilities and interests are checked, physical defects noted, co-operation of parents solicited, and an effort made to arouse students' interest through individual conferences and selection of books and magazines to suit various reading levels and interests.

¹ National Society for the Study of Education. *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*. Public School Publishing Co. 1937. (Thirty-sixth Yearbook. Part 1.)

Reading for pleasure recognizes no grade limitations and accordingly librarians in co-operation with teachers are making an effort to provide stimulating ungraded material in attractive editions on a variety of subjects. Marked attention to reading as a joyful adventure acts as a stimulus in mastering reading difficulties. This phase of the reading program offers a challenge to every teacher and librarian. A stimulating, thought-provoking discussion of the art of reading was presented by Frances Clark Sayers before the Section of Library Work with Children at the American Library Association conference held in New York City, June 1937, and later published in the *Horn Book*.² Miss Sayers makes a plea for emphasis on the art of reading, using Hans Christian Andersen's "Nightingale" as a parable for modern situations.

Teachers eagerly search for suitable materials to use in a reading program. No ready-made list of books will adequately meet the needs of any given group or situation, but with hearty co-operation between teacher, school librarian and the public library a carefully selected collection of books on a variety of subjects for all interests and reading levels will provide an active laboratory. Books to challenge the imagination, fairy tales, tall tales, interesting biographies, tales of travel, adventure, and books of information, as well as picture books, offer a tempting bait. The value of picture books in arousing interest in reading is worthy of consideration for use with any age group.

To inspire and arouse interest in reading, teachers and librarians must know the literature of childhood both old and new, then they can impart their enthusiasm and share books with each individual child according to his needs. Courses in reading guidance for teachers and li-

brarians, book talks to boys and girls, school libraries, children's rooms and collections for young people in public libraries, special juvenile editors in the publishing field, current reviews of children's books by specialists, authors and artists collaborating in making beautiful and wholesome literature for children encourage a love for reading and at the same time provide enrichment materials for the teacher of reading. Adults who have the privilege of teaching reading and sharing books with children contribute an intangible joy to childhood, and stimulate better class room activities in all subjects.

SELECTED LIST OF CURRENT MATERIAL

BOOKS

Betts, Emmett Albert. *Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties.* Row, Peterson, 1936. \$2.00.

Research findings on remedial reading summarized and interpreted for the class room teacher. Appendixes include test materials and record forms. References at end of each chapter.

Books for Children with Seriously Defective Vision. University of the State of New York Press, 1937. Free in New York State. Others apply.

Subtitle: "A revised edition of the list, Good Books for Bad Eyes. Compiled by the Physically Handicapped Children's Bureau and the Library Extension Division of the New York State Education Department and a subcommittee of the School Libraries Committee of the New York Library Association." "These titles have been selected from the many recommended books for children and young people because of large clear type, unglazed paper, and simple, distinct pictures." Indicates grades for which books are suited and size of type. Books are arranged in the following groups: Picture books and easy books; Stories for older boys and girls; Myths and fairy tales; Poetry and plays; Manners and conduct; Nature study; Social studies.

Broening, Angela Marie, and others. *Reading for Skill; Practice Exercises for Remedial Reading and Library Skills.* Noble, 1936. \$1.20.

Challenging, practical materials to use in leading boys and girls to independent thinking in reading and the use of reference books.

² Sayers, Frances Clark. "Lose Not the Nightingale." *Horn Book*, 13:22-35, July, 1937.

Center, Stella Stewart, and Persons, Gladys L. *Teaching High-School Students to Read; a Study of Retardation in Reading.* Appleton-Century, 1937. \$2.25. (English monograph, No. 6. National Council of Teachers of English.)

Results of an experiment in remedial and corrective instruction in reading sponsored by a Federal project under the direction of the authors in the Theodore Roosevelt High School, New York City. Methods, procedures, materials of instruction, charts, tables and case studies are given. Stresses the improvement of reading skills in all groups.

Gates, Arthur Irving. *The Improvement of Reading; a Program of Diagnostic and Remedial Methods.* Rev. ed. Macmillan, 1935. \$2.50.

A practical aid for teachers, principals, supervisors and school librarians. The first half of the book is definitely addressed to the non-expert, whereas, the latter part offers material for more technical research workers. Gives diagnostic and remedial instruction in the primary grades and in grades three to eight, and cites case studies. Stresses the use of tests and interesting materials. Lists tests and sources.

Harrison, Martha Lucile. *Reading Readiness.* Houghton, 1936. \$1.20.

A practical discussion for kindergarten and first grade teachers. Presents factors influencing reading readiness and suggests instructional procedure and remedial measures. Contains a list of one hundred titles for the children's library in the reading readiness program. Graphic charts and description of tests.

Hovious, Carol. *Following Printed Trails: Things to Learn about Reading.* Heath, 1936. \$1.32.

An introduction to reading for young people. Includes practical tests and exercises. Chapter topics: Before the gong; Handicaps; Headlines; Little foxes; Full steam ahead!; High spots; Birds of a feather; A word to the wise; All your yesterdays; Photographers all!; Eye stretchers; Sampling; Looking backward; Sleuthing for clues; Transfer!; Happy landing!; Guideposts; On your own.

McCallister, James Maurice. *Remedial and Corrective Instruction in Reading: A Program for the Upper Grades and High School.* Appleton-Century, 1936. \$2.00.

A practical presentation of reading deficiencies in the upper grades, diagnostic techniques and treatment, guidance in relation to other grades, and suggestions for the administration of a reading program. Illustrative case studies cited.

Monroe, Marion and others. *Remedial Reading: A Monograph in Character Education.* Houghton, 1937. \$1.40.

An experiment in character education conducted in ten schools at Washington, D.C., representing elementary, junior high and senior high school levels under normal conditions is described in its relation to reading disability and personality adjustment. Indicates the methods of remedial instruction used at various levels in vocational schools.

National Society for the Study of Education. *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report.* Public School Publishing Co. 1937. \$2.50. (Thirty-sixth Yearbook, Part I.)

Recommendations for a reading program to meet contemporary needs. Includes a comprehensive review of scientific studies and trends in reading since the first report of the Society in 1925 (Report of the national committee on reading. The twenty-fourth yearbook, Part I, Public School Publishing Company, 1925.) Special topics discussed: A decade of progress; The nature and types of reading; The place of reading in the curriculum; The nature and organization of basic instruction in reading; Reading in the various fields of the curriculum; The development of reading interests and tastes; The materials of reading; The School library; Vocabulary development; The improvement of oral reading; Individual differences and their implications with respect to instruction in reading; The measurement and evaluation of achievement in reading; Diagnosis and treatment of extreme cases of reading disability; The reorganization and improvement of instruction in reading through adequate supervision.

New York City Association of Teachers of English. *Further Studies in Reading.* Noble, 1937. \$1.50. (Yearbook, No. 2.)

Useful suggestions for stimulating reading interests. Includes lists of materials.

Sullivan, Helen Blair. *Selected Vocabulary.* Interest Reading List. Boston University Educational Clinic, February, 1936. \$.10. (Pamphlet.)

Covers material for grades three to eight. Books are illustrated and are in good type. "The books on this list are suggested for use in remedial or special classes to meet the needs of children who require material in which the interest level is several grades higher than the vocabulary level"—Introduction.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Booker, Ivan A. Better Reading Instruction. *Journal of the National Education Association.* 25:185-92. September 1936.

Concise article containing pertinent excerpts from the *Research Bulletin* of 1935 on Better Reading Instruction. Topics represented: Laying the foundation in reading; Successful methods of teaching read-

ing; Determining reading achievement. Bibliography lists material on these topics.

Deal, Ada B. and Seamans, Albert. Group Remedial Reading in High School. *English Journal*. (H.S. ed. and Col. ed.) 26:355-62. May 1937.

Synopsis of a practical experiment used to improve reading skills without special equipment. Emphasizes the use of school and public library in arousing reading for pleasure.

Durrell, Donald D. Remedial Reading. *Booklist*. 33:177-79. February 1937.

Presents four methods of handling reading problems, viz, "Grouping for instruction, differentiated library assignments, extensive reading, specialized remedial materials."

Durrell, Donald D. Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School. *Elementary English Review*. 13:101-06, 111, March, 1936; 149-56, April, 1936; 184-93, May, 1936.

Bibliography, summary and evaluation of research in reading centering around primary and intermediate problems relating to reading readiness, vocabulary, word analysis, materials of instruction and general methods.

Elementary English Review. Special Number: Reading. 13: April, 1936; 14: April, 1937.

Feature articles in both issues pertaining to various phases of reading problems.

Eyes Have It. *Literary Digest* 34: 123: 17-18, April 24, 1937.

Illustrated article explaining the ophthalmograph and metronoscope, instruments used for diagnosing and correcting reading difficulties as used by Dr. Stella Center, director of the reading clinic at New York University.

Gates, Arthur Irving and Bond, Guy L. Prevention of Disabilities in Reading. *Journal of the National Education Association*. 25:289-90; 26:9-10, December, 1936-January, 1937.

Suggestions for adaptation of materials and methods of instruction to the needs of individual pupils.

Gates, Arthur Irving and Bond, Guy L. Reading Disabilities; Remedial Reading WPA Project in New York City. *Journal of the National Education Association*. 25:243-44, November, 1936.

Work of the reading clinic in the Speyer experimental school (Public School 500) in New York City and suggestions for administering case studies.

Townsend, W. B. Diagnostic and Remedial Program in Reading. *Instructor*. 45:20, February, 1936; 45:22, March, 1936.

Helpful detailed outline for the inexperienced teacher to follow in diagnosing and planning remedial activities in the primary grades. Part I—Discovering the difficulties; Part II—Attacking the problem of eliminating the difficulties.

The Retarded Reader and the Library: A Symposium. *Library Journal*. 62:53-8, January, 1937.

Extracts from papers presented before the Colorado Library Association October 24, 1936 on reading problems as they affect the school library. Examples of various situations in which the school library can contribute toward the solution of reading problems.

Sayers, Frances Clarke. Lose Not the Nightingale. *Horn Book*. 13:22-35. July, 1937.

A stimulating article on the joy of reading resulting from the mastery of the art of reading. Miss Sayers urges that the mechanics of reading need to be combined with "intuitive knowledge, poetic knowledge, childlike knowledge." The librarian and the teacher have an opportunity to provide challenging material that will arouse and extend children's reading interests.

Vaughan, Frances M. Book Service for Kindergarten and Primary Grades. *American Library Association Bulletin*. 31:443-48, September, 1937.

Description of activities in a central primary library room in preparation for reading readiness and new experiences with literature. Includes many of the book titles used with the group.

Walcott, Fred G. New Methods and Objectives in Teaching Dull-normal Pupils to Read. *School Review*. 44:348-61, May, 1936.

Suggestions offered as the result of two experiments in remedial reading conducted at the University High School of the University of Michigan.

Witty, Paul Andrew and Kopel, David. Evaluating Reading and Remedial Reading. *English Journal* (H.S. and Col. ed.) 26:449-58, June, 1937.

Stresses preparation of teacher to intelligently diagnose individual needs of students and to relate work to the student's personal interests, ambitions, everyday experiences and development.

Wrightstone, Jacob Wayne. Diagnosing Reading Skills and Abilities in the Elementary School. *Educational Method*. 16:248-54. February, 1937.

A Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936*

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THE COMMITTEE on Current Research of the National Conference on Research in Elementary School English was appointed for the purpose of assembling and studying the current unpublished research in the field of elementary school English. Two years ago Miss Josephine MacLatchy presented before this group the first study the Committee had made. Her report covered the period 1925-1934. The present study relates to research during the school years 1934-35 and 1935-36 and attempts to supplement Miss MacLatchy's report.

In order to gather together as much as possible of the research which has been done during this period, all the most likely sources of information have been canvassed. Letters were written to professors of education directing English research, requesting them to report any studies in elementary school English made under their supervision during the past two years which have not been published. Replies were very generous and in some cases abstracts of the studies were furnished. The writer is especially indebted to Dr. Harry A. Greene, Director of Educational Research and Service at the State University of Iowa for his help in abstracting a large number of the studies from Iowa. The Bibliographies of Research Studies in Education for 1934-35 and for 1935-36, published by the Office

of Education, were checked, as was the file of theses in education which the library of the Office maintains through contributions from many universities. Various educational journals, including the *Journal of Educational Research*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Elementary School Journal*, and *School Review*, which carry lists of research studies or which refer to studies in the field of English, were consulted. A notice of the preparation of the report with a request for information about studies in the field was published in the December and January issues of the *Journal of Educational Research* and the *English Journal*.

After the list had been compiled it was checked against the *Education Index* in order to eliminate any studies which had been published. Requests for the loan of theses included on this list for which abstracts had not been furnished or which were not on file in the Office of Education library, were sent by the librarian to the libraries of the universities represented. Forty-two theses were received and abstracted. Studies listed but not abstracted were either not received or received too late for inclusion.

Studies reported herein deal primarily with grades one to eight. A few are concerned with the preschool child. Grade nine is included in those cases in which the study deals with the junior high school and includes grade nine as well as grades seven and eight in its analysis.

* Read before the National Conference on Research in English, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 20, 1937.

The summary has been held to reporting studies dealing with the objectives and techniques of oral and written English. Studies of reading, literature, penmanship, and spelling, which to be sure are closely related to language, have been eliminated in order that the report may gain in unity.

In this list of language studies, as in others previously reported, topics on which most investigations centered included analysis of existing courses of study and textbooks, diagnosis of common errors and remedial measures to correct them, functions and methods of grammar instruction, problems involved in vocabulary development, and testing techniques. Each of these offers many difficulties and challenges to classroom teachers; no doubt this accounts for the large number of studies which they represent. Several less familiar but equally promising fields of study are represented in the list by several studies each. One of these has to do with the methods and effectiveness of integrating language instruction with other parts of the school curriculum. Another deals with the special language problems faced by certain handicapped groups such as the deaf and hard of hearing, the partially sighted, the maladjusted, the foreign-speaking. Still another concerns creative writing as a language instruction problem. Because these three represent relatively newer problems than the others, they will be reported first.

Integration of Language with Other Parts of the Curriculum.

The slogan "Every teacher an English teacher" is by now thoroughly accepted, even though not yet an actuality. It has long been contended that schools which provide guidance in language usage in all phases of the curriculum rather than only in a separate language period could cer-

tainly expect their pupils to make gratifying improvement in language. Mr. Darlington (20)¹ found that to be true as a result of a program for the improvement of English in the seventh grade of the Fairbury, Nebraska, junior high school. Probably with more surprise, however, he found that pupil progress in subject matter of other subjects was greater as indicated by the average mean on standardized tests when the teachers in other subjects placed major emphasis on correct oral and written English than it was when no special emphasis was placed on English. The plan seemed so successful that the teachers who co-operated in the experiment recommended continuation of the program, apparently without the forebodings sometimes found that emphasis on English might detract from the effectiveness of other instruction.

Miss Gillett (28), Miss Thompson (69), Mrs. Smith (64), and Miss Voils (76) all tried experiments in integrating language with the social studies, the results of which open up interesting possibilities in course of study construction. In an historical account of the correlation and integration of composition and pioneer history in a third grade, Miss Gillett identified all the situations in which composition had been taught directly or incidentally as a part of the study of pioneer history, presented a record of class procedure and samples of children's work, listed the skills on which practice was afforded, and showed in which situations and in what ways language guidance occurred. Standardized test scores testified to the effectiveness of the procedures.

Similarly, Miss Thompson recorded the development of four social studies units dealing with nature study, health, citizenship, and Indian life, each one showing how language and the social studies can

¹ Parenthetical numbers refer to studies listed in the bibliography which appears on page 254.

be integrated at the second grade level. Miss Voils experimented with methods of integrating English and social studies in the junior high school, finding that the free reading of the social studies seemed particularly useful in linking them with English study.

And finally, to show that the movement for integration of social sciences and English is by no means a sudden enthusiasm, Miss Boyer (9) examined educational magazines, books, opinions of leaders, surveys, and experiments to trace its evolution, particularly with reference to the junior high school level. Probably one element of greatest freshness and promise is afforded by the detailed accounts given in several of the studies of exactly *how* English can function effectively in a given unit in other curriculum fields.

Language Problems of Handicapped Children.

It is encouraging to find a number of studies in the list which deal with the special language problem which the several groups of handicapped children face. The list includes one study each concerning the blind, the deaf, the foreign-language background, and the economically underprivileged, and two studies concerning the mentally retarded. Two of the studies compared the errors made by normal children with those made by the blind in one case, and by the deaf, in the other. Miss Powers (57) analyzed and diagnosed the oral language errors of the Youngstown Braille pupils, comparing the findings with those for more than a half million sighted children in O'Rourke's experiment. For at least five months she kept a record of the errors made by her blind pupils, finding that on the O'Rourke tests in English usage and vocabulary, they reached or exceeded the medians made by sighted pupils. This was true for both the children of high

mentality and those of low mentality. In a study of the errors in written language of deaf and hearing children, Mr. Hunt (37) found them to make about the same kind of errors. In the early years of training the deaf child made errors attributable to training, but after obtaining a working amount of language, his errors appeared to change to the kind made by normal children.

Three of the studies reported attempt to develop courses of study adapted to the particular needs of some special group. Miss Niemeyer (53) prepared a manual for teaching elementary English to first-grade Spanish-speaking children, with each week's procedures outlined in considerable detail. Because of the controversies existing in regard to the methods and in fact the desirability of teaching children in primary grades to speak English or to have their daily instruction in English, it is interesting to note Miss Niemeyer's point of view as shown by the following quotations: "Of course the children are not going to learn to read or write in English before they have learned how to do so in Spanish." "Spanish is used to give the child a clear idea of what is being talked about, and yet the course uses English from the first." "In order to insure greater smoothness and ease of expression the teacher . . . may use explanations in Spanish but not translations."

For eighth grade pupils coming from underprivileged environments, Miss Scott (62) worked out a course giving sixty minutes each week for reading, discussing, and writing poetry. Though no pressure was exercised to secure original contributions, children voluntarily wrote verse averaging two poems each, and after a summer's interval urged the continuance of their poetry class. A special group of handicapped children in junior high presented Miss O'Neil (54) with

the problem of discovering as exactly as possible what they had already learned of English usage, and what their capacity was, and then of formulating a practical course of study in English for them. She strongly recommended the organization of English instruction around English needs in other phases of the pupil's school program. For another group of eighth grade pupils of retarded mentality, Miss Thompson (68) planned a course of specific remedial treatment suited to their needs which materially reduced the number of failures in the group.

One other study somewhat related to the foregoing, may be reported here. Not infrequently children of foreign-born parents, especially of foreign-speaking parents, are expected to suffer certain handicaps in school work. Miss Levy (41) attempted to determine whether racial differences may be detected in junior high school achievement by ascertaining the relationship of achievement in junior high school English and mathematics to nationality. To do so she grouped all the eighth grade children in an Albany school, all of whom were born in America, on the basis of those whose parents are native born, foreign born, or mixed. For this particular group the median intelligence quotient was higher for the children of mixed and native born parentage than for those of foreign parentage. Objective tests of achievement showed that children of foreign-born parents apparently suffered no unusual handicap in English, and that they were more consistent in making higher median grades in achievement than were those of the other groups.

Creative Writing

On the desirability of providing opportunity and stimulus for creative writing there is little argument; on methods of doing so there is considerably less agreement. In order to determine experi-

mentally under classroom conditions the comparative effect of three different methods of presentation upon the imaginative quality of pupils' descriptive writing, Mr. Littwin (43) conducted an extensive experiment with nearly a thousand children in New York City seventh and eighth grades. Children in the control schools received no direct training in writing imaginative description. In the experimental schools three different methods were used: (1) the study of literary models; (2) the study of a picture; (3) making the pupil sensuously responsive to his environment. It was found that all these methods had merit; that the method of making children sensuously aware of environmental situations was superior to either picture or literary model study, and that imaginative writing requires observational rather than linguistic training.

Miss Roberts (60) attempted to measure the effectiveness of teaching English by the traditional methods based on the textbook and emphasizing rules of grammar, in comparison with that of English guidance through an activity, in this case the writing of a book on pioneer life. So far as she could discover neither method seemed to have a real advantage. Miss Helbig (32) compiled a list of topics which 118 teachers of second, third, and fourth grades assigned for written composition over a period of twenty school days and compared it with a list of those which children chose for themselves. She found that children write about science and social science as first choice; animals or pets second. Teachers' assignments are similar. As to which influences the other offers an interesting field for speculation.

A severe word of caution and probably a valuable one comes from Miss Baechle (3) who collected 360 poems from pupils in grades seven, eight, and nine and rated them with the assistance

of teachers of English. She concluded that all were marked by banality of expression, there was little fresh imagery, the thought was negligible. Furthermore, she was convinced that the authors were too easily satisfied, that they seriously needed training in self-criticism.

(To be continued)

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What Sixth Grade Children Are Reading

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BOOKS ARE among the greatest factors of an individual's growth. The progressive schools are today more than ever emphasizing the need for first hand experience. There is no question that *doing* is a vital prerequisite of child growth, but it can readily be seen that an education based solely on personal experience would be limited and insufficient. It must be supplemented by the vicarious experiences gained through reading. Books permit us to talk with the greatest and most wise, with those of times gone by and with our contemporaries. Our philosophy, our ethics, and our attitudes are tremendously influenced by our reading. We can therefore realize the important relation of a child's reading to his development.

The purpose of this paper is first, to show the factors that aid sixth grade children in determining which books to choose for voluntary reading and second, to study a list of books voluntarily read by sixth grade children in order to analyze their choices and interests.

The reports on voluntary reading came from 325 children, the upper 75 per cent of the sixth grade pupils, for two successive years, of an elementary public school. According to the Otis Group Intelligence Test the average intelligence quotient of the subjects was above 115. The school is located in a suburb of Cincinnati, in a community where the economic and cultural background of its members is above average. A knowledge of children's intelligence and social-

economic background is important in studying and understanding their reading interests, for they are factors in developing tastes. However, in most cases, these tastes may be influenced by teachers and librarians.

Factors Sixth Grade Children Consider in Choosing a Book

What are the factors sixth grade children consider in choosing books for voluntary reading? One hundred and fifty-four children were asked to list the factors they consider in choosing a book for voluntary reading. The factors are listed in Table I. The influence on children of the format of books, as shown in Table I, confirms the study of F. J. Olcott and F. E. Bamberger, as quoted by Uhl¹

Ninety-seven children claim that attractive illustrations help them in choosing a book while 35 base their choice upon an attractive frontispiece. This is not surprising, although it is only recently that publishers have realized the effect of beautiful illustrations on children's choice of books. It is not surprising because physical beauty of anything is quickly and easily noticed and is always attractive. Even when the reader is not looking at the illustrations, the beauty and color of the book are pleasurable attendant factors in his reading, just as a beautiful theater increases the pleasure an audience finds in a performance. A superior sixth grade girl confided to her teacher, "I have

¹ Willis L. Uhl, *The Materials of Reading*, p. 88. New York: Silver Burdett and Co., 1924.

TABLE I
FACTORS SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN CONSIDER IN CHOOSING BOOKS

	81 Girls	73 Boys	154 Total
Favorite or well known author	70	53	123
Attractive title of book	58	44	102
Attractive illustrations	55	42	97
Read beginning or first chapter	38	32	70
Recommended by teacher or children	35	22	57
Read table of contents	33	23	56
Attractive frontispiece	18	17	35
Subject or type of story	17	15	32
Like adventure stories	14	12	26
Like medium size print	19	5	24
Read the introduction	11	11	22
Recommended by librarian	12	4	16
Attractive cover	4	12	16
Read a little at end of book	8	6	14
Read a little in middle of book	6	8	14
Consider the publisher	6	8	14
If whole book is attractive	10	4	14
Notice kind of characters	8	5	13
Read preface	6	6	12
Look through card index	6	6	12
If it is a mystery story	6	5	11
If it is fiction	7	3	10
Read here and there in book	6	4	10
Like sport books	0	8	8
If book is on teacher's book list	5	2	7
If it is not too old or too babyish	4	3	7
Like shabby book because it has been read by many people	4	3	7
If book is about girls	6	0	6
If it is not too thick a book	4	1	5
Like an exciting story	3	2	5
Consider book covers posted in school room	4	0	4
Like much conversation	4	0	4
Like latest book out	3	1	4
Will not take worn or dirty book	2	2	4
If book is reported on in class	3	0	3

found that some books are good even though they have ugly illustrations. I read the books but close my eyes when it comes to the pictures, and turn the page quickly."

Twenty-seven children considered the size of the print, three desiring large print; one, small print; and twenty-four, medium sized print. Of course the hygienic effect must be taken into account here, but it should also be remembered that sixth grade children are not

attracted by books in very large print because they associate that factor with what they term "babyish" books. On the other hand, very small print is associated in their minds with difficult and uninteresting subject matter. Two superior boys claim that they like "small print and hard books."

Some of the children consider the entire make-up of a book and state that they notice whether the whole book is attractive; others are influenced by the book

cover. Many children listed a number of considerations because they were asked to give all the factors they could think of which influenced their choice.

A favorite or well known author is the greatest single factor in the children's choice of a book, while the title of the book ranks next in importance. Fifty-six children read the table of contents while 70 pupils read a little at the beginning of the book or the first chapter. Others continue this sampling process by reading a little in the middle or at the end, while others glance through the book reading here and there. A small number read the introduction and preface, and a few children consider the publisher when choosing a book. Uhl states that plot and action are the major interests in elementary school children's choice of content. The children in this study, as seen in Table I, are interested in books of adventure, of mystery, fiction and sport, while some interest is also shown in moral stories, humor, stories of long ago, biography, history, geography, and animal life.

By various means of advertising the business man always keeps his product before the public. He uses the ideas of repetition and pleasant associations in order to create desire for his goods. Teachers might adopt his methods. The place in this scheme held by the publisher and printer in relation to the format of the book has already been discussed. A beautiful book helps sell itself. But the teacher can also help. Of course, the teacher must first know what books are good. She may herself present short, interesting reviews, have some of the children give book reports, read interesting passages from certain books to the class, display book covers and books, and give the pupil book lists. She can also take the children to the library and have a classroom library and reading periods. Librarians are aware of

the possibilities of guiding their readers toward worthwhile materials. They have tried the method of having the best books, in beautiful editions, displayed in attractive, open-shelf reading rooms. Special book review pamphlets, book displays of interesting and timely subjects and of new books are other methods used by librarians to attract readers to certain books.

According to Table I we find that fifty-seven children consider the teacher's or children's recommendation in their choice of a book while sixteen depend upon the librarian's judgment. Other factors which aid them are: a suggestive book list given them by the teacher, book covers posted in the school room, book reviews given in class, the display shelf of the public library, book reviews, and movie plays.

Aiding children to develop favorable attitudes towards reading and towards good books is of utmost importance for their development. Uninteresting or unpleasant associations with books may cause a child to dislike reading and thereby limit his growth to few first hand experiences. There are people today who rarely read anything but the newspaper and some worthless magazine. We find children who read with avidity but get no nourishment from their books because they read cheap sentimental trash that has no literary value, truth, nor information. We sometimes find sixth grade girls reading stories of boarding school and college life while the boys read football and baseball stories. The same thing always happens, with the hero coming out triumphant in the end. Even when a child gets interested in a narrow field of worthwhile literature it is not wise to permit him to be totally unconscious of what else exists. He must learn to read a variety of materials in order to develop favorable attitudes and a broad outlook on life. One's philosophy is certainly

affected by the books he reads. Provincialism and prejudice result from ignorance of other peoples and times. Sue Dodd Hutchinson found that in 118 English poems the nationalities of the characters were mostly limited to the English, Americans, Scotch, and Romans.² Such countries and civilizations as China, Russia, Australia, Egypt, are vague, and seem peculiar in the minds of our children, and adults too, because they know so little about them. Information about social problems, politics, economics, and science, can be made fascinating to children if they are written in a way that will bring them within the grasp of the child. Comprehension is essential to enjoyment. Few books have been written for children on these subjects in comparison to the number of fiction books.

To summarize: It was found that sixth grade children usually base their choice of books on definite factors. Of these, the format of the book is influential in directing the child's choice. Some of the outstanding factors are the *author*, the *title* of the book, the *table of contents*, and *the way the book begins*. Other considerations are recommendations made by teachers, children, or librarians, and content that shows adventure and action. Making children aware of good books helps to develop a taste for literature on various subjects. Because we are today living in a world where groups and nations are interdependent and where means of communication are many and swift, it is essential for our children to gain a broad and rich outlook of the world in which they live by means of vicarious experiences which can be obtained only through reading good books in many fields.

Analysis of Book Reports

The sixth grade children described

² Willis L. Uhl, op. cit., p. 178.

earlier in this study were told that they would receive credit towards their English grades if they would hand in written reports of books found on the prescribed list or of any other good book. The book list was taken from the New York State Course of Study in English.³

The sixth grade enrollment for the two years totaled 325. Most of the children handed in some book reports. The number of book reports handed in totaled 1092, of which 484 were from the boys and 608 from the girls. Seven hundred and thirty-five different books were covered in this study. The greater number of reports from the girls does not necessarily prove that they read more than the boys, but may indicate that they hand in more reports. Many children do not care enough about the credit to take the trouble to write out reports. Few children report on all the books they read. When they do they often select the better books.

Upon examining the complete list of books reported on, it is found that the children select from a wide range of books. Of the entire 1092 reports, only twenty-two books were reported as being read by five or more children. Table II shows the favorites of the 735 different books read. One hundred and eighty-five book reports, 58 for the boys and 127 for the girls, were handed in on these twenty-two books. It is interesting to see how this list of favorite books compares with those made in other studies. Fifteen of the twenty-two are found in the list of the New York State Course of Study in English. This has a selection of well known and long accepted books. Ten of the twenty-two listed are found in the "Books to Grow On"⁴ list, which "represents the combined judgment of workers with children in America's largest public libra-

³ *Course of Study in Literature for Elementary Schools, Grade 1A—Grade 8B*, Board of Education, The City of New York: 1927.

⁴ Published in the *Journal of the National Education Association*, February, 1924.

TABLE II
FAVORITE BOOKS BASED ON THE NUMBER OF REPORTS HANDED IN

Author	Title	Boys	Girls	Total
Clemens, Samuel	Tom Sawyer # W L*	17	6	23
Alcott, Louisa	Little Women # L	0	19	19
Stevenson, R. L.	Treasure Island # W L	10	2	12
Burnett, Frances	The Little Princess L	0	11	11
Dodge, M. M.	Hans Brinker # W L	4	7	11
Dix, M. B.	Merrylips # L	0	10	10
Otis, James	Toby Tyler # W L	4	6	10
Tarkington, Booth	Penrod and Sam	3	5	8
Daniel, Hawthorne	Peggy of Old Annapolis	0	7	7
Rankin, Carroll	Dandelion Cottage L	0	7	7
Alcott, Louisa	Little Men L	3	3	6
Lamb, Charles and Mary	Tales from Shakespeare # L	0	6	6
Clemens, Samuel	Huckleberry Finn W	5	1	6
Wells, Carolyn	Two Little Women in the Treasure House	0	6	6
Alden, Raymond	Why the Chimes Rang L	3	2	5
Camp, Walter	Danny Fists L	5	0	5
Wiggins, Kate	Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm # L	0	8	8
Hale, Lucretia	Peterkin Papers # L	1	4	5
Lang, Andrew	Arabian Nights #	1	4	5
Malot, Hector	Nobody's Girl L	0	5	5
Perkins, Lucy	Italian Twins	2	3	5
Canfield, Dorothy	Understood Betsy	0	5	5
Total		58	127	185

* #—Is on "Books to Grow On" list.

W—Is on Winnetka's list of most popular books.

L—Is on list given to children, taken from the New York State Course of Study.

ries." Five of the twenty-two favorites listed in Table II are on the Winnetka list of twelve most popular books. This list of twenty-two favorite books confirms previous studies concerning the books children enjoy reading, and is also in agreement with authorities on children's books. However, the children do not agree with all authorities, in their reading tastes, for not a single Newbery prize book is included in this list of favorites. Perhaps the librarians who award the Newbery prize overemphasize the literary qualities, deriving their ideas of children's tastes from the selected children who visit libraries regularly.

Very noticeable is the fact that boys

and girls read different books. From Table III it can be seen that 96 book reports covered only eleven books that are liked by both boys and girls. Of the total 735 books reported on only 130 were read by both boys and girls. This supports the findings of Jordan that boys' and girls' interests at this period are not alike.⁵ If boys' and girls' reading interests are incompatible, to which have the English teachers catered, if to either? Of the entire twenty-two favorite books (Table II) only one book, *Danny Fists* by Walter Camp, was read by *boys only*; all the others were read either by girls only or

⁵ Julia M. Harris, H. L. Donovan and Thomas Alexander, *Supervision and Teaching of Reading*, p. 450. New York: Johnson Publishing Co., 1927.

by both boys and girls. However, ten books from the favorite list, comprising 84 book reports, were read by girls only. We might say then that very often girls will read boys' books but rarely will boys read girls' books.

TABLE III
BOOKS FAVORED BY BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS

Author	Title	Boys	Girls	Total
Clemons	Tom Sawyer	17	6	23
Stevenson	Treasure Island	10	2	12
Dodge	Hans Brinker	4	7	11
Otis	Toby Tyler	4	6	10
Tarkington	Penrod and Sam	3	5	8
Alcott	Little Men	3	3	6
Clemens	Huckleberry Finn	5	1	6
Alden	Why the Chimes Rang	3	2	5
Hale	Peterkin Papers	1	4	5
Lang	Arabian Nights	1	4	5
Perkins	Italian Twins	2	3	5
Total		53	43	96

Why do children enjoy certain books? A few quotations from the reports made on the most popular books may indicate the answer to that question.

Little Women, by Louisa Alcott

I like this book because it tells life's true hardships and how some people take them.

Tom Sawyer, by Samuel Clemens

Tom Sawyer is a very humorous book. Just think of it! Small boys like Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, and Joe Harper are going to be pirates on a small raft and are trying to capture big boats!

A sad part is when Tom's aunt Polly thinks that Tom is drowned, which he is not.

I liked when Tom and Huck were in the court house and Tom was telling about what happened in the graveyard. I would recommend this book to the class because it is exciting all through the book. It is sad in some parts but I think every one would enjoy reading this book.

I like the scene in the cemetery best of all. I would recommend this book to the class because it is so funny and thrilling that you laugh your head off, and in places where it's thrilling you get so scared you don't know what to do.

Most of the boys like the graveyard scene best of all while the girls are interested in the scene where Tom and Becky are lost in the cave.

The Little Princess, by Frances Hodgson Burnett

The most vivid scene was when Mr. Barrow came and told the school teacher that Sara's father was dead, and that the child was left penniless. She was made to do hard work when before she had lived in luxury.

Treasure Island, by Robert Louis Stevenson

It is not too much to say that this is the best story of adventure ever written for boys and girls and one that no boy or girl can forget. It is a rousing tale of pirates and buccaneers, of old sea dogs and gentlefolks, of sailing ships and mutineers, of lovely islands and buried treasures; a book you can't leave until you finish it. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes thrills and cold shivers.

In conclusion: This study indicates the basis on which sixth grade children select their books. These children's voluntary reading covers a wide range of materials but certain favorite authors and books stand out and are similar to those selected and reported in other studies. Boys' and girls' reading interests differ. Boys show no interest in girl's books but girls enjoy books written for either sex. On the whole, with a few exceptions, the children of this study really read good books.

It is hoped that the findings may be helpful to teachers. The knowledge of what children read and desire to read should enable the teacher to get closer to her children and to integrate their outside reading with school activities.

The Picture Crutch in Reading

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TEXTBOOKS play an important role in the American schools because we rely to considerable extent on books both in matters of content and method of instruction, and because our schools are primarily reading schools. The last quarter of a century has witnessed marked changes in school textbooks. The text of today is much more attractive in appearance and doubtless serves its purpose more effectively than did its predecessors.

The evolution of the textbook is more evident in the primary grades than at some other grade levels. Two of the changes in primary readers have followed very definite lines. There has been increased attention to vocabulary control and more extensive use of color and illustration. The changes in vocabulary are at least partially based on experimental evidence. It is some of the considerations about the use of illustrations that are to be discussed here.

Unfortunately we know very little about the value of pictures in primary readers. Investigation has shown that children have preferences for certain colors.¹ They also choose some techniques of picture making more frequently than others.² Primary teachers are usually sure that pictures create interest. Might it not be pertinent to enquire, interest in what? Analysis of a situation in which primary children have access to books, such as a library table, will show that they are interested in the pictures. In fact, they are

so interested that they seldom attempt to read the book but spend their time looking at the pictures. Such attention reveals interest in the pictures as pictures, and not interest in the pictures in relation to the reading matter which the book contains.

There is no reason why children should not like pictures and I do not wish to intimate that they should be deprived of whatever pleasure they derive from this source. Nor is there any reason why we should expect children to thumb through pages of printed matter without pictures and experience pleasure from such an exercise. However, it should be borne in mind that these are not comparable situations. Any statement that children are more interested in reading material that is illustrated than that which is not is purely a matter of opinion. The writer has seen first grade children intensely interested in reading material which had no illustrations. Such interest is based on the reading matter itself, and not on any extraneous aids such as pictures.

Pictures have an appeal for adults as evidenced by the popularity of tabloid newspapers and picture magazines. Adults prepare and choose the textbooks that children use. It is possible that in the matter of illustration we have used adult standards in judging what we call the interests of children without distinguishing between the appeal of brightly colored pictures and the appeal of well written story material that has intrinsic worth.

Some primary textbooks lean heavily on the illustrations in matters of method. The pictures are the conspicuous feature

¹ Bamberger, Florence E. *The Effect of the Physical Make-up of a Book Upon Children's Choices*. Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1922.

² Miller, William A. "Picture Choices of Primary-Grade Children." *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 37, pp. 273-282 (December, 1936).

of many primary readers. Often teachers in making only a casual examination of a book look almost exclusively at the pictures. Most primary teachers at least think they make considerable use of the illustrations in teaching. However, this use is seldom based on clear cut purposes and no check is made on the results thus obtained. In fact, the matter has progressed so far that in many instances pictures are used as a crutch to strengthen teacher interest in books as well as to bolster up the support of the children who use them. In such cases little or no thought is given to the educational implications of the use of illustrations.

Now sometimes a crutch is necessary. Methods which illustrate such words as *chair*, *horse*, or *boy* with appropriate pictures are probably valid. Indeed, there are many worthwhile uses for pictures in textbooks. However, no one would be likely to use a crutch for purposes of adornment. Yet, in so far as we have any objective evidence as to other uses, the illustrations in many primary readers serve only to make the book what is usually termed, "more attractive."

A study soon to be reported presents evidence that children in the primary grades read material which has no illustrations as understandingly as that which is illustrated in the modern vogue. It might shed some light on these findings to consider the probable reasons the pictures did not make a greater contribution to the children's understandings.

There are several reasons which may be given for the failure of pictures to contribute to the understanding of what is read in the book. Probably children do not read pictures accurately. Verbalism may exist in picture reading as well as in reading printed material. Children who have had little or no training in reading pictures are likely to get only general impressions from pictures. They may, be-

cause of limited experiences, read into the pictures erroneous meanings.

Teachers probably often fail to use the pictures in such manner as to contribute to understanding in reading. It is quite evident that if pictures are used only for their "interest" value, or are admired for their color or beauty, without reference to their content as it is related to the understandings involved in the reading they accompany, they cannot serve a useful purpose so far as improving comprehension is concerned.

It would be interesting to know whether or not pictures can clear up concepts that are vague when they are encountered in reading material. As long as it is not known what understandings children do or do not have when they read a given piece of material it is not possible to judge the ability of pictures to clear up the unknown. One of the reasons pictures often do not contribute to understanding may be that the pictures are not focused on the parts of the reading matter which is the most difficult to understand.

Most of the material in primary readers is of the child experience type. It deals with home and family life, neighborhood doings, and such experiences as trips to the park, the farm, or the dairy, which are commonplace to many children. Such material has relatively few concepts which children do not understand. Under such circumstances it should not be expected of pictures that they make a contribution to understanding.

Many pictures are poorly chosen for the purpose of bolstering up understanding. Too often the writer of the book has had one point in mind and the illustrator a different one. Frequently a page will carry several ideas or concepts while the illustration which accompanies the page will emphasize part of these understandings and not others.

(Continued on page 274)

A Change for the Better

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THE YEARLY drive for money to carry on the work of the thirty-eight organizations aided by the Toledo Community Chest is one of the civic movements in which our schools have taken an active part for years. This year the policy was changed so that the emphasis was shifted from the money to be obtained to an understanding of the service rendered by the various organizations.

During the depression years the goal had been to raise as much money as possible. Schools competed with each other regardless of the wealth in the districts represented. Classes within the buildings vied with each other, groups within the classes competed. Competition became the keyword.

To raise the money required ingenuity, time, and labor. Hot dogs, shoe shines, shows, candy, finger waves, manicures, auto washing, paper sales, raffles, any device was used to raise money. School work was disorganized, stomachs upset, parents besieged for pennies and nickels. The larger the family, the greater the demand. Each child must be treated the same in the home; money for one child to go to a show meant money for each child in the family. Mothers wearied of baking cakes and cookies which they had to buy back again. Principals and teachers were asking, "Where are we going? What are we doing to our children?" The Community Chest was worthy of our support, but surely there must be another solution to the problem.

A conference with the superintendent resulted in his taking the matter up with the Community Chest authorities. He ex-

plained to them that our children were being trained to expect something for their money, they were not being trained to give to a cause because it was worthy. The Community Chest authorities agreed that we were losing a valuable opportunity to train public minded citizens, and that a change in policy was desirable, even if we did not contribute the usual sum of money. Parent Teacher Clubs were canvassed and expressed relief at a change of policy.

Meetings were held and the following procedure mapped out. One class in each elementary, junior high, and high school was asked to visit one organization connected with the Community Chest. After the visit, the class discussed, as an English project, how best to give to the entire student body of the school a true picture of the value and need of the organization visited.

Circuits were arranged with from four to six buildings in a circuit. After the class had given its message in the home school, the performance was presented in another school in the circuit. This was repeated until each school in the circuit had been visited. In short, each building prepared one program and received from four to six in return. The day following a program was set aside for a voluntary offering by the children.

Each class chose the organization it wished to visit and care was taken that no duplicates appeared in a circuit. Every organization was visited by at least one class except the Dental Clinic. No one was interested in that organization, probably because of personal experiences. The most popular was the Day Nursery.

The most frequent method of presenting the needs of an organization and the work done by it was by dramatization, through lantern slides, reports, posters, slogans, songs, shadow pictures, depending upon the ability of the class and the type of service presented.

When the final curtain fell, we found that our total school contribution was only a few hundred dollars less than the largest amount given under the former policy.

The result that could not be measured was the change in attitude throughout our school system and in many of the homes. Teachers felt they were doing something worth while educationally. Children no

longer thought the Community Chest was a box on the teacher's desk, but began to visualize the services thus financed. A better feeling developed between buildings. The children who took an active part in the campaign gained most. They gained in poise, in meeting unexpected situations, in meeting strange audiences. They began to have some insight into one of our civic problems. We feel the Community Chest has given us an opportunity to train our children to give without expecting something in return, to become more intelligent citizens, and to develop into worthy civic leaders in the future.

THE YOUNG READER AND HIS TEACHER

(Continued from page 249)

Concise advice for the class room teacher's use. Outline of procedure is developed through the following: an analysis of the class personnel; an appraisal of the curriculum practices; a survey of the reading abilities and interests of each pupil; and diagnosis and treatment of pupils with reading diffi-

culties. Includes three charts: Chart I—Suggested diagnostic instruments for skills and abilities in reading; Chart II—Suggested remedial treatments for reading deficiencies; Chart III—Types of reading materials available to pupils.

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Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition

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(Continued from October)

IV. METHODS OF CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

This section contains statements of principles of method as related to classroom organization, management, and instructional techniques, which from experimental and theoretical evidence, appear to be important in teaching elementary English composition.

A. All English it not taught in the English classroom.

Skill in language expression is so much a part of the total life activity of the individual that it is too much to expect that a brief period of instruction in the classroom will make it effective. Not only does the pupil lose control rapidly through the ordinary laws of forgetting, but he fails to make the necessary transfer of his language abilities from English classes into other subjects unless he is constantly stimulated to do so (35, 130). The evidence indicates encouraging improvement in language usage when teachers in other related subject-matter fields insist upon correct usages in all written and oral expression (49, 81, 84).

B. Instruction in language must be constructive as well as corrective.

English teaching has been criticized, perhaps justly, because it has appeared to place too much emphasis on the remedial and corrective aspects of expression, and

too little on the development of constructive expressional abilities. Some of this may be due to curricular emphasis, for it is true that curriculum workers for the past fifteen or twenty years have looked upon the collection of errors in written and oral composition as a rich source of instructional material in language (34, 98, 159). Work of this type has been limited by the fact that the observers were unable to secure a complete picture of the total language situation. Even adequate samples of representative written expression are difficult to secure. Until recently, at least, complete verbatim records of oral production have been impossible to secure. Thus with few exceptions the attention of the observers has been focused on the errors made by the subjects, and not on the relation of these errors to their total usage, or to the characteristics of the correct usage itself. Only when records of language activities are complete, accurate, and unedited can these skills be evaluated in terms of their true social importance. The language curriculum must be constructive as well as corrective. The importance of this point of view, and the recognition of the handicaps under which curriculum workers in language have been working have stimulated the development of equipment capable of securing extensive and accurate records of all types of language activities under classroom conditions (11, 64).

C. English skills are most effectively taught in natural settings.

The actual basis for this statement is primarily observational and theoretical evidence, although some indirect experimental evidence supports it. The motivation of learning in language by giving the child occasions to use the desired skills under life-like conditions is effective teaching technique (123). Boeh (15) reported that when English work was presented as an activity the pupils showed more improvement in English expression, applied the knowledge acquired in English more generally in other subjects, and far excelled the control group taught by traditional methods. Letter writing may be taught as a series of abstract language abilities totally unrelated to life. Experience and some evidence show, however, that these same skills are taught more effectively when the stage is set in such a way that the child, in order to accomplish something he very much wishes to do, is himself confronted with the need for their use. Humphreys (93) experimenting with letter writing, found that the social situation is far superior to an artificial situation in presenting the letter writing skills. This principle would seem to apply with equal fitness to other socially useful language abilities.

D. Instruction in language should emphasize the audience values.

The evidence on this principle is theoretical rather than experimental but it seems well-supported by observation and common sense. A person learns to stand on his feet and think out loud by being placed frequently in situations in which he is obliged to do just that. In real life it is assumed that a speaker has something to say. It is expected that he is better informed on his subject than his audience and accordingly that what he has to say will interest them. In this way the proper

audience values are developed both for the speaker and the listener.

E. Freeing the child from mechanical handicaps facilitates language expression.

Common observation in the language classroom reveals the fact that lower grade children in general express themselves much less fluently in written form than in oral form. Mechanical handicaps, such as handwriting and spelling, doubtless account for much of this difference (124). Experimental evidence contributed by Gates and Brown (55) and by Voorhies (153) indicates that children in the first and second grades learn to use the manuscript form of writing more quickly than the cursive form and that children thus taught do better in beginning reading. Observational evidence of an informal type secured in the University of Iowa Elementary School indicates that children making use of manuscript writing in the first and second grades are fluent in their written expression.

The use of the typewriter by young children facilitates beginning reading and the expression of ideas in written form (149, 162). Specifically the evidence presented by a highly significant study of the problem indicates not only that it is feasible to use the typewriter in the conduct of the ordinary work in the elementary school but that its use stimulates elementary school pupils to produce more written material than they would otherwise produce. Furthermore, the evidence revealed an increase in the level of achievement of the pupils in some of the fundamental school subjects.

F. Mastery of the rules of grammar gives no assurance of control over the usages involved.

Grammar as a method in the teaching of English has not proved encouraging

in the light of modern objectives. Studies (2, 18) have demonstrated that "knowledge of formal grammar influences ability to judge the grammatical correctness of a sentence and ability in English composition only to a negligible degree." Studies by Asker (2), and Boraas (18), Briggs (23), and Hoyt (90) and more recent investigations by Bontrager (16), Butterworth (27), Ortmeyer (113), Symonds (141), and many others present evidence showing that training in formal grammar does not result in a great gain in the writing of correct English or in the ability of the individual to recognize correct English in writing. Ortmeyer (113) and Butterworth (27) both showed no significant carry-over of the knowledge of punctuation rules to the correct use of the skill covered by the rule. Bontrager (16) summarizes his experiment by saying "the large number of technical words and ideas involved in the statement of rules of punctuation emphasizes the importance of meaning factors which must rank high among the determinants of achievement. The varying degrees of difficulty of variations covered by the same rule indicate the futility of expecting mastery as a result of teaching general principles." Symonds (141) concludes that grammar should be conceived as a means of summarizing correct usage rather than as a means for learning it. Training in the choice of correct expression has more influence on usage than grammatical analysis of the learning of rules. Benfer (9) showed little or no relationship between sentence sense and knowledge of subjects and predicates. Hatfield (79) suggests that the inductive presentation is more desirable for bright pupils while the dogmatic presentation by the use of rules is better for slower pupils. Stormzand and O'Shea (139) reported a reduction of 50 per cent in the amount of technical grammar in the textbooks during the past forty

years. The Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English recommended that "all teaching of grammar separate from the manipulation of sentences be discontinued . . . since every scientific attempt to prove that a knowledge of grammar is useful has failed . . ." (78). In spite of this lack of evidence to support formal grammar as an instrument for the teaching of English usage, it seems to have a reasonably secure place as an editorial tool.

G. The practice of having pupils re-write and re-submit themes with marked corrections is distinctly open to question.

This principle is based upon a recent experimental study by Fellows (46) on the influence of theme-reading on the elimination of technical errors. Heavy schedules and large classes should make teachers of English appreciative of these results. While the statistical analysis of the results of this experiment indicates that theme-correction was slightly more effective in the elimination of the technical errors involved in the study, there is considerable doubt that the time spent by the teacher in reading and marking the themes and the pupils' time in rewriting them is time well-spent. The theme-correction method was slightly superior in the development of ability in punctuation and grammar, but it was inferior in the correction of spelling and capitalization errors. It was somewhat more effective in the improvement of ability in English mechanics among the brighter pupils. Fellows himself makes the significant statement that "no longer can a teacher feel confident that meticulous reading and correction of pupils' themes will effectively eliminate all the errors therein." In general this same conclusion was indicated by Norton's study (111) a number of years earlier.

H. Dictation exercises appear to be useful in fixing certain of the mechanical skills in language.

The writing of carefully constructed exercises under dictation conditions has been found to be a very effective way of fixing and developing mastery of certain of the mechanical skills in language (29, 51). Such material presents admirable drill on such spelling, form, punctuation, and capitalization skills as are included in the exercises (24). Unfortunately material of this character is not generally available below the junior high school grades.

I. Drills based upon the pupil's own usage errors are highly effective instructional materials.

Seegers (128), searching for ways to improve language usages, found marked improvement when pupils were informed of their own deficiencies. Shepherd (131) found that pupils improved most when they studied according to their own needs. Lyman (105) concludes after careful study of the experimental evidence that "regimented group instruction is inferior to individual instruction." According to McKee (108) "the success of the composition period which seeks to provide a direct attack upon the learning of certain language abilities will depend upon the teacher's power to focus the child's attention upon those items which he has not yet mastered."

This principle is in exact accord with the evidence on the psychology of learning. By such a procedure the child is brought into personal contact with his own weaknesses which have arisen in connection with his own language activity. He recognizes them as his own. He wastes no time drilling on usages which are not his own or which cause him no trouble and gradually builds up a consciousness toward his own types of error. This is

making language instruction functional (144).

J. Variety in expression and in sentence structure can be developed through emphasis.

Part of the problem of developing variety in expression lies in making the individual aware of its desirability. Monotony in expression passes because it is allowed to pass. A week of intensive work on the part of an elementary class produced a list of seventy or more different ways of expressing the idea of "said" in a series of lessons dealing with anecdotes. Similar emphasis on variations in types of sentences used and in words chosen would produce similarly striking results.

K. Adjustments in instruction must be made for differences in the mental maturity of the students.

Experimental evidence submitted by Hatfield (79) indicates that dull pupils appear to profit more from the use of rules in formal instruction than do the brighter children. Fellows (46) pointed out that theme-reading by the teacher with the further requirement that the theme be rewritten and re-submitted was somewhat more effective for the brighter pupils than it was for the slower ones. Benzler (10) found in a study of punctuation usages in written compositions of low and high I.Q. pupils in the fourth and fifth grade that the low I.Q. pupils show a smaller range of punctuation usage than do the high I.Q. groups, and that the error-quotients show considerable difference between the two groups. Vanderstoep (150) in a similar type of study at the sixth grade level found that the high I.Q. children attempted to use longer sentences, utilized many more punctuation skills in their writing, made half as many incorrect substitutions of

one punctuation mark for another, and showed distinctly higher levels of control over the punctuation usages as shown by the comparison of error-quotients.

Such relationships between language usage and intelligence are not surprising, in view of the very great complexity of language ability itself. In fact, the basic language skills appear to be interwoven with the total personality and capacity of each individual.

L. A laboratory technique is an effective way of individualizing instruction in English.

The justification for the inclusion of this statement is based on evidence inferred from experiments at the high school and the college levels. Lindquist (104) found, after a year of experimental work with a laboratory plan of instruction in freshman college English, that the returns were most encouraging. His study revealed, however, as might have been expected, that improperly developed instructional materials and instructors untrained in the procedure placed definite limitations on the method.

It may be unsafe to reason by inference from these studies that similar laboratory methods will work with elementary school children, but there is much in the method to commend it. Perhaps properly prepared instructional materials may encourage teachers to undertake the method. In theory, at least, it has rare possibilities for taking care of individual needs in English expression.

Chamberlain (33) conducted a rather carefully controlled comparison of the laboratory and the traditional recitation methods in an attempt to discover which was more effective in helping low ability pupils to overcome language usage errors and achieve progress in written expression. The results over an eight-month period show slight but consistent differ-

ences favoring the laboratory technique, both in terms of averages and in terms of the number of individual pupils favorably affected by the method.

M. Ability grouping in English classes fails to realize its apparent possibilities for stimulating creative work and eliminating difficulties in English.

The evidence on this point is quite definitely at variance with the theoretical advantages of ability grouping. Part of the difficulty seems to lie in the use of inadequate instruments for grouping purposes. Washburne (154) presented data indicating the undesirability of using intelligence quotients to group pupils and then treating the groups as if they were homogeneous. Gross inaccuracies in grouping appear in all such cases. In most experiments on grouping the overlapping of ability of pupils in the lowest section on those in the high sections is so great that real differences in accomplishment could not possibly appear. The solution of the difficulty undoubtedly lies, not in the discontinuation of attempts at homogeneous grouping, but in the development of instruments capable of discriminating for smaller differences in individual abilities.

N. Special drill drives on language skills results in the distinct improvement of pupil mastery.

While there is some disagreement on this issue, especially when the long view of improvement is taken, there seems to be adequate evidence for the conclusion that individualized drill on the more formal usages and skills result in increased mastery. Critics of drill have pointed out that the pupil's reversion to former bad habits in language after a period of intensive drill is often not taken into consideration in the evaluation of drill pro-

cedures. Furthermore, it is maintained that the undue amount of time spent on the drill frequently robs instructional emphasis on other desirable skills, thus causing compensating losses (105).

On the other hand, Seegers (128) maintains that "marked improvement in language usage may be expected from a program based on systematic planning, co-operation among departments, enlistment of pupil interest, and the individualization of instruction." Numerous controlled experiments (1, 45, 143, 157) all established the superiority of specific types of drill materials over classroom instruction without the drill in the elimination of common elementary school language errors. Thomas (143) showed that the use of specific types of drill not only reduced the number of technical errors made by pupils in responding to a formal test of a similar type but also appeared to

transfer to the reduction of similar technical errors in written compositions. Guiler (70, 71, 72) reported favorable results in ninth grade and college freshman classes. Gunn (73) reports favorable results from the use of twenty-five minutes of drill each week in reading, vocabulary, and the mechanics of English with high school pupils. The results were reflected in improved scores on standardized tests. Hinchman (83) used a modified course of study with slow groups of college freshmen and produced improvements of from one to three years of normal growth as revealed by three standardized tests. While it is true that further experimental work is needed on this problem with more attention to the control of variables, the general efficiency of such special drives on the language skills seems to be well established.

(To be continued)

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, published monthly from October through May, at Detroit, Michigan, and Menasha, Wis., for October 1937.

STATE of Michigan } ss.
COUNTY of Wayne

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared J. L. Certain, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the business manager of the ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, C. C. Certain, Detroit, Michigan.

Editor, C. C. Certain, Detroit, Michigan.

Managing Editor

Business Manager, J. L. Certain, Detroit, Michigan.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

C. C. Certain, Detroit, Michigan.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state). There are none.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the twelve months preceding the date shown above is (This information is required from daily publications only).

J. L. CERTAIN (business manager)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of October 1937.

(My commission expires Feb. 17, 1941)

Margaret H. Smith

New Books for Children

(Continued from October)

Indians

Red Jungle Boy. By Elizabeth Steen. Illus. by the author. Harcourt, Brace, 1937. \$2.00.

The every-day life of Indians of the interior of Brazil for younger readers. Pictures accompanied by simple episodes. The coloring is unusual and effective.

Marcos, a Mountain Boy of Mexico. By Melicent Humason Lee. Illus. by Berta and Elmer Hader. Albert Whitman, 1937.

A well-told story of a little boy who goes down from his mountain home to the city of Oaxaca to earn money to buy a pair of oxen for his father. The various handicrafts of the Mexicans are described.

White Indian. By Grace Moon. Illus. by Carl Moon. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

A little white girl goes for a brief visit with her Navajo nurse, and encounters mystery, danger, and adventure.

Nab-le Kab-de. The Story of a Navajo Boy. By Isis L. Harrington. Illus. by Louise Beaujon. Dutton, 1937. \$1.50.

An account of the life of the Navajos. The volume contains several stories written by Navajo children.

The Colored Land. A Navajo Indian Book. Written and illustrated by Navajo Children. Edited by Rose K. Brandt. Scribner's, 1937. \$1.20.

Interesting for authorship and illustration. The stories are simple accounts of everyday doings. Some of the poems are group-written.

Dancing Cloud, the Navajo Boy. By May March Buff. Illus. by Conrad Buff. Viking, 1937. \$2.00.

Again, an account of Navajo life—building the hogan, sheep-herding and shearing, rug-making, and the making of silver jewelry. The pictures reproduce the hot colors, violent light, great distances, and angular outlines of the Navajo country.

Information

On the Air. The Story of the Radio. By John J. Floherty. Illus. with photographs. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

Rehearsals, sound effects, types of broadcast, communications, and television are some of the complicated phases of modern radio discussed in this book. To grade-school boys, the book would be endlessly fascinating.

Boys' Book of Flying. The Latest in the Air. By Charles Boff. Illus. with photographs. Dutton, 1937. \$2.00.

Excellent for boys of 10-16. The book (which is British) gives much information about the magnificent air-craft of England and the continent. Chapters on makes of planes, air mail, dirigibles, gliders, stratosphere flights, speed, test pilots.

Rolling Along Through the Centuries. By Marie Emilie Gilchrist and Lucille Ogle. Illus. by Norbert Lenz. Longmans, Green, 1937. \$1.25.

Besides furnishing entertaining reading, this unusual book should be useful for reference in social science in the grades. The author shows that a history of wheels is a history of civilization. Fine illustrations. Recommended.

Biography

Saints and Rebels. By Eloise Lownsbury. Illus. by Elizabeth Tyler Wolcott. Longmans, Green, 1937.

Brief biographies of twelve humanitarians who have struggled during the past five hundred years, for justice, peace, and "humanity's redemption from exile." Sketches are arranged to begin with a contemporary—Henrietta Szold, and go back through the years. Among the twelve included are Catherine Breshkovsky, Lord Shaftsbury, Hannah More, William Wilberforce, Sara Josepha Hale, Thomas Paine, Fra Antonio.

Sebastian Bach. The Boy from Thuringia. By Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher. Illus. by Mary Greenwalt. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00.

A fine gift for a child who loves music, and an excellent volume for a school library.

Joseph Haydn. The Merry Little Peasant. By Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher. Illus. by Mary Greenwalt. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00.

Excellent. Gives examples of Haydn's compositions.

Plutarch's Lives. Shortened and simplified by Grace Voris Curl. D. C. Heath, 1937. 96¢.

This great source book made accessible to boys and girls.

Fiction

A Star for Hansi. By Marguerite Vance. Illus. by Grace Paull. Harper, 1936.

An unusually appealing little German Christmas story of an applewood box which is only for a care-

ful child, and in which there must always be at least one coin "to call in others," unless the owner's heart tells her plainly to spend it.

Messenger to the Pharaoh: A Story of Ancient Egypt. By De Wolfe Morgan. Illus. by William O'Brian. Longmans, Green, 1937. \$2.00.

Like most of the historical fiction published by this house, the book is well written, exciting, and carefully based on what is known of the period. The scientific knowledge of Egypt, the arrogance and stupidity of the priests, the agriculture of the country all enter into the story.

Barefoot Days. By Anna Rose Wright. Illus. by Paul Chapman. Grosset and Dunlap, 1937.

Children on a Virginia plantation. A well-written account of day-to-day experiences of that section—all-day preaching, horseback riding, and lesser excitements. Selected by the Junior Literary Guild for younger readers.

Lumbercamp. By Glen Rounds. Being the Life and Good Times of the New Whistle Punk at Camp Fifteen Up Horse Crik Way with Many Drawings Made on the Scene by the Author. Holiday House, 1937. \$2.00.

It is impossible to set age limits on this book. Boys will like it, and grown ups who enjoy gusty humor and tall tales will relish it. The volume is bound in board; its typography and illustration are unusually well-matched; it is written in lumbercamp dialect (modified, to be sure); and is full of such rollicking words as *swamper*, *skinner*, *bumbled*, and *high-tailed it*. It contains some rare whoppers of the Paul Bunyan type.

The Covered Bridge. By Cornelia Meigs. Illus. by Marguerite de Angeli. Macmillan, 1936. \$2.00.

A Vermont farm at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Ethan Allen comes into the story as a kindly neighbor. Excellent descriptions.

The Loving Heart. By Elsie Singmaster. Houghton Mifflin, 1937. \$2.00.

A moving, because sincerely-written novel for older girls. Gettysburg, just before and during the Civil War, is the setting.

Nursery Books

How Percival Caught the Python. By Percival Stutters. Holiday House, 1937. \$1.00.

A picture on every right-hand page, a line of text on the left page. Resourceful Percival, with his Boy-Scout shorts and chubby face will win the affection of little children.

R. Caldecott's Picture Books, Nos. 3 and 4. By Randolph Caldecott. Illus. Frederick Warne, 75¢ each.

Along with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, nursery rhymes are the inalienable right of every child, and Mother Goose never had an illustrator equal to Caldecott.

The Old Woman and Her Pig, and *Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse*. Illus. by Jack Tinker. Holiday House, 50¢.

One of the delectable little "stocking books" put out by this house. This one is printed in red and black, with tiny drawings through the text.

Puss in Boots. Holiday House, 1936. 50¢.

Another "stocking book." The type is bold, clear, and well-leaded. The illustrations are from wood-engravings by Fritz Eichenberg.

Collections

From Umar's Pack. Compiled and edited by Effie Power. Decorations by Dorothy Bayley. E. P. Dutton, 1937. \$1.50.

A collection of stories for telling aloud. Each story has its source in folklore, and each has been used as a basis for great art—music, literature, sculpture.

Tales of a Chinese Grandmother. By Frances Carpenter. Illus. by Malthe Hasselriis. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.50.

The author is the daughter of the author and traveler, Frank Carpenter, and like him has an understanding of other peoples and remote countries. The romantic and charming folk tales are beautifully presented, and the illustrations, by Mr. Hasselriis, in the Chinese tradition, are exceptionally fine.

THE PICTURE CRUTCH IN READING

(Continued from page 264)

Children do read understandingly material which has no illustrations. They can be kept interested in reading such material, too. The pictures in the primary

reader are a significant factor in the cost of the book. Perhaps it is time to examine the picture crutch in reading and evaluate it for its true worth.

Editorial

Spread a Rich Table

ONE CONCLUSION to be drawn from Miss Zeligs' findings, reported on page 257, is that literary taste can be improved, within limits.

The article should not be mistaken for a study of the *unguided* preferences of children, for her Table I shows evidence of education in literary discernment. Recommendations by teacher and librarian, both direct and indirect (as for example, inclusion of a title in a list, or posting of book jackets in the library) account for many of the pupils' selections. Other items on the table, such as familiarity with author and publisher, and sampling of contents, are further evidence of training in literary taste.

Left to themselves, the young public, like the adult public, is apt to prefer the banal, as witness the high popularity of certain titles on the Winnetka "trash list" (titles excluded from the printed *Winnetka List* because they were judged either harmful or notably lacking in literary worth).¹

Limits are reached in the matter of literary taste, however, as Miss Zeligs points out, not a single Newbery prize book appears. It is well to keep in mind, in this connection, that the Newbery medal is not awarded on a basis of popularity. It is given to the *most distinguished* contribution to children's literature. And "popular" and "distinguished," despite the happy results of Miss Zeligs' study, are often far apart.

Arnold Bennett declared that classics are recognized and maintained not by general readers, but by those he calls

"the passionate few" who "find a keen and lasting pleasure in literature," and who ceaselessly prod others into reading what is superior.

It may come down to something like this: Left to themselves, the young public may read a few distinguished books, but in general, it reads the tawdry and banal. With persistent, patient, and clever teaching, the young public can be led to read and enjoy a larger number of superior books. But even with all the crafty devices of advertising, some distinguished literary works are never popular; they are for the few—the "passionate few."

It is evident, then, that to base book purchases solely on the popularity of titles is dangerous, for it will include much that is mediocre, and will exclude some of the finest literature in the world.

Our public schools have been accused of not providing opportunities for superior children. Well then, let us at least give shelf room in our libraries, and a few dollars of our book purchase budget, to the classics that may not be widely read, to the books for the "passionate few" who advance literary taste. Let us put *The Odyssey* on the library shelf for the children who can, in imagination, sail the "wine-dark sea"; keep the Newbery prize *Cat Who Went to Heaven* at hand for those—however few—who will grasp the thesis that gentleness is powerful; and allow Alice to welcome to Wonderland those children who will chuckle at the mad tea party and the untidy White Queen.

¹ Published in *The Elementary English Review*, vol. IV, 1927.

Shop Talk

National Conference on Educational Broadcasting

THE Second National Conference on Educational Broadcasting, to be held at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, November 29, 30, and December 1, will hear spokesmen for the radio audience, the radio industry, and education express their views on educational broadcasting. Representatives of the Federal Radio Education Committee, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Office of Education Radio Project will report on government activity. While many organizations are sending official representatives, the Conference is open to every individual who wishes to attend, and has been planned to present, even to the least informed, a survey of problems, progress, and possibilities of educational broadcasting.

National Council of Teachers of English

"Recreating Life through Literature and Language" is to be the general theme of the meeting of The National Council of Teachers of English in Buffalo, November 25-27. Speakers at the general sessions will include Joseph Wood Krutch, Paul de Kruif, Alfred Kreymborg, Genevieve Taggard, Elizabeth Drew of Cambridge University, and Burton W. James, director of Washington State Theatre.

There will be special sessions for the discussion of The Experience Curriculum in Practice, The Motion Picture and Radio, Relating English to Life, Speech, The English Program in the Elementary School, and Problems of English Organizations.

The program of the Elementary section is as follows:

ELEMENTARY GROUP

Saturday, November 27, 9:30 A.M.

Topic The List: *Reading for Fun*

Presiding Mary D. Reed, Indiana State Teachers College

The Intention of the List, *Reading for Fun*—Eloise Ramsey, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan

Showing Books—Miss Aldean Mardell Beatty, Directing Teacher, Roosevelt Training School, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan

Introducing Books—Mrs. Helen Southgate Williams, Detroit, Michigan

Building a Library—Miss Martha Seeling, Department of Education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Discussion: Guidance of Individual Reading

Leader: Dr. Helen Mackintosh, Associate Professor Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

Discussion Members: Mrs. Bertha Fitzsimmons, Supervising Teacher, Laboratory School, Indiana State Teachers College; Miss Neoscoleta Plunkett, Dean of Seventh Grade East Junior High School, Binghamton, New York

Detailed information concerning the meeting may be obtained from the Council office, 221 West 68th Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Technical Helps

Teaching the Use of Books and Libraries by Ingles and McCague (published by The H. W. Wilson Company) has been reissued in a new edition. The book is a manual for the use of teachers and librarians in giving library instruction. It contains teaching suggestions, practice material, and a variety of suggestions adapted to various conditions and degrees of library skill.

Teachers faced with the task of selecting or recommending reference books may find help in two charts prepared and published by Laurance H. Hart of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The charts are "The Comparison of Dictionaries," and "The Comparison of Encyclopedias." They give information on price, number of pages, number of entries, illustrations, revisions, and evaluations.

Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities: 1936-1937, is the title of a list compiled for The Association of Research Libraries under the editorship of Donald B. Gilchrist. It is published by The H. W. Wilson Company.

Only about a third of the dissertations appearing annually are ever published, but copies of unpublished manuscripts are available to those wanting to consult them through inter-library loans. The list just published shows what material is available, and where it may be obtained. A general subject cross-index and an author index facilitate the locating of material in the volume.

This list is the fourth of a series which should be useful to research workers and reference librarians in locating material hitherto most elusive, because hidden away in unpublished, or briefly abstracted dissertations.